

THE DAILY DIARY  
OF  
**CLAUDIUS WILBUR  
ALLBEE**

WHILE QUARANTINED WITH  
**SMALLPOX**

IN THE PEST HOUSE IN  
**SALIDA, COLORADO**

AROUND THE YEAR  
1915

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Transcribed from the personal diary of Claudius Wilbur Allbee, no date given, by Bradley Scott Jackman. Physical copy in possession of Bradley Scott Jackman.

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Claudius Wilbur Allbee

1876-1969

## INTRODUCTION

Claudius Wilbur Allbee was born 23 Jun 1876 in Waushara, Wisconsin, to Perry & Emma Ursula (Udell) Allbee. C.W. died 2 Apr 1969 in Florence, Fremont, Colorado. He married Myrtle Sweeney 4 Sep 1903 in Chama, Rio Arriba, New Mexico. They had two children, Roberta Belle, and Claudius Evan. For several years during his children's youth, Myrtle was institutionalized, probably for depression, and the children lived with family members or with caretakers while C.W. worked as an engineer on the railroad.

This diary was found in 2011 in the records of Roberta Allbee Tufford, the daughter of Claudius Wilbur Allbee, after having been stored for many years and forgotten. Roberta had passed on in 1995, but had been an avid genealogist in her day, and retained many notes about her ancestry. Her notes were stored in metal boxes in an old leaky shed for decades, but are now being reviewed and restored by her descendants, to the best of our abilities.

The date of this diary is not known, but judging by the date and weekday combinations, it must be either 1909, 1915, or 1920. It seems most plausible that this would have occurred in either 1915 or 1920, though we can't be sure as of yet. C.W.'s son

Evan was born in 1907, and Roberta graduated high school in Alamosa in 1924, so these dates place a constraint on the years when both children would have been living with his sister, as stated in the diary.

The transcription is rough, and can be updated if corrections are submitted. The transcription was edited for punctuation and ease of reading, though the original intent was retained as much as possible. A photographic reproduction of the actual diary has been included at the end of this text.

The transcription was made by Bradley S. Jackman, a great-great-grandson of C.W., and he retains the originals at this time.

We hope you enjoy this little piece of history.

BRADLEY S. JACKMAN

EDITOR

## DAILY DIARY WHILE I HAD SMALLPOX.

Was taken sick Nov 16th while enroute from Chama to Alamosa but did not feel very bad, only ached all over. I reported sick and did not go out on my engine when she went out.

Nov 17

I got up about 9 a.m. feeling very bad but went up town to eat a little breakfast, got my mail, made out two time slips and mailed them and went to my room about noon. At about 2 o'clock, Miss Kaper phoned for a doctor but did not get one until about 6 p.m. In the mean time I had one chill after another with intermittent fevers. The Doctor gave me some medicine and I passed a miserable night.

Nov 18

I got up about 10:30 a.m., dressed and went to the well and got a pitcher of water and had not been to my room more than 15 minutes when I commenced to chill and fever and in 30 minutes I was cramping all over and felt as though there was gallons of water under my skin. Well I was out of my head most of the time until about night when I came to myself. Engineer H. M. Wright, Engineer Happer, Engineer Riddle, and the Doctor,

Dr. Frieburger, were there and I felt easier owing to Hypos the doctor had injected. They secured a nurse for me, that night I rested a little better on account of them shooting so much dope in me.

Nov 19

They bundled me up and took me in an automobile to the depot and loaded me on the Salida train for the hospital. I was on a cot in the baggage car and the cot was so springy I suffered terrible and I became very sick, throwing up nearly all of the way over. Was so weak on my arrival, could not stand up. I was taken to the hospital in the ambulance, and when there was filled up with medicine. I had a chill that night but no more fever and did not have any more afterward.

Nov 20

I commenced to improve some but felt very weak, cat napped all day, only when the nurses would come and bother me with medicine. That night I rested good.

Nov 21

Still very weak but feeling fine, I sat up in bed a little while and the nurse told me I could dress the next day. I was commencing

to feel very hungry but they would not give me anything but coffee and milk. Sores commenced to come on my upper lip and the nurse told me my fever was broken and they were fever blisters.

Nov 22

I felt so good after my breakfast of two soft boiled eggs and a little toast that I dressed and went to the sun room and smoked a part of a cigar. After being there about half of an hour I walked around a little but became so weak that I dressed and went to bed. I noticed some rash in my hair and on my face. The nurse said she would tell the doctor.

Nov 23

I got up and dressed, went downtown and got a shave and haircut. When I got back to the hospital my face and head were a solid mass of pimples.

I had consulted one of the doctors before going down town, he said it was exportigo(?) and gave me some ointment for it but on my return there were 4 doctors waiting for me and they pronounced it small (???).

They locked me up in my room until after noon, then took me to an old unused laundry that had a bed and stove in it. I

found some old magazines and papers and managed to put in the balance of the day quite well. I rested good that night.

Nov 24

This a.m. the State Board of Health called on me and pronounced it smallpox. I asked what they were going to do with me, he said they would take care of me. I was notified that day that I would be taken to the Pest House that night but was not.

Nov 25

I did not get my breakfast until 8:30 a.m. and at 9 a.m. Dr. Curfman pounded on the door and said he was going to take me to the Pest House in his automobile, well we went to the Pest House like a wad out of a cannon. I unloaded in front of this wonderful place and the auto started off, the Drs said goodbye old "man."

Then I commenced to reconsider after I found the main building without windows or doors. The floor about 6 inches or a foot deep with filth. There was a supply of provisions(?) and two cots and bedding piled on the floor, and an old cook stove made in the year one without any pipe. I said to myself, here is where a white(?) man breaks quarantine, then I went on

the outside and found about ½ ton of coal, then commenced looking for water. No water nearer than the little arksas(?) and it was ¾ mile away. There was a 12x14 board shack apun(?) about 20 feet from main building. I looked in here, it was as filthy as the other building but could be cleaned easier so I started a fire outside and finding a stick with a nail in the end, I picked some old clothing off of the wall and burned it up, then found an old broom and commenced to clean out. After doing all I could without a stove or water I went outside and waited results.

About 11:30 a.m. a “rig” came up and I called out “Smallpox!”

The answer I got was “I am not afraid of you.”

I said “You had better be, for I am beginning to get desperate.”

Then a man about 60 years old said, “I came out to take care of you.”

I said “You might as well go back, for I am going to Alamosa and will be there at 8:00 pm tonight.” Then he showed a pistol and said that I would be in the Salida Pest House, and if I showed him any trouble he would be compelled to resort to that, showing his pistol.

Well, my little bluff did not work, so I had to do the next



best thing. He started to clean up the main building, I told him I would die before I would stay in there. Then he looked in the shack and said it was too small for the two of us. I said, "Very well, you can have the main building and I will take the shack." Then he scratched his head and said we could take our beds out every day and he guessed we could get along.

Then he wanted to move the stove, I told him we would have to scrub out first, then he started for water. I let him look until he was satisfied but he found none, well we did not scrub out and I was very weak but I managed to get the cook stove in our templey virtue, and he started to get dinner without washing himself. I said "You had better wash your hands, as this is Thanksgiving Dinner." He said he could not, there was no water, but I made him go to the river and carry a bucket. Well we had fried potatoes, canned cornbread and butter and coffee for dinner at 4:30 p.m. Then we managed to get our own beds made and I laid down nearer dead than alive.

Nov 26

Dr. Jones came today, said I must not eat any fat meat. He also sent out a quart of olive oil, my he must think I am a high water man, and needed lots of valve oil. I was up on the roof patching some holes as it looks like a storm when a sewing

machine agent drove up. I called out "Smallpox!" and that this was a Pest House.

He said "I guess you do not want a sewing machine."

I said, "Not unless it would cure smallpox!" But he never stopped to answer and the way he drove away would terrify beholders.

Nov 27

Mr. Garman drove by and throwed off a gunny sack full of old magazines and papers, the city had two barrels of water hauled in whisky barrels and when the tea kettle boils and we make coffee this old Pest House smells like a distillery.

My guard and would-be-nurse and I have gotten to be quite chummy. He proved to be an old prospector and a 32° mason. He had gotten short of funds and the city was paying him \$3.00 a day and he took this way to make a grub stake for the winter. But he knows about as much about cooking as a hog does about ironing a ruffled shirt, and has no more business trying to nurse than a phony rabbit has to try and whip a bull dog.

Nov 28

I rested well last night, about two inches of snow fell last night. This is Sunday and have had no callers.

I looked over our reading matter and found some appropriate reading for the day.

Nov 29

About 6 inches of new snow fell last night. Vic Learimer came out to see how I was and brought me some mail. We ordered about a weeks supply of groceries by him as this was the first time anyone had showed up, we were reduced to potatoes, flour, water, and salt with a little coffee without milk or sugar, but now we are nicely provided for about a week.

A young couple rode by horse back, she was astride and stopped for a drink of water. We told them this was a Pest House, and had a case of smallpox in here but they could help themselves, which they did, and after they drank the young man said he thought it might be a saloon from the taste of that water, then rode away.

Nov 30

Still snowing and stormed all day, no one passed today and we did not see a living soul, nothing of any event happened.

DEC 1

Well this is another fine day, Vic Learimer came today, he

brought me some newspapers, a letter from my sister, my clean clothes, and my sugar. My bumps are fast disappearing, and I feel very well.

DEC 2

No callers in forenoon, I shaved my whiskers, they were more like hay, my face is not a bit sore. We had a fine dinner of beef steak, eggs, cooked peas, rye bread and butter, coffee with milk and sugar, baked apples, stewed prunes, fried potatoes with onions and gingersnaps for millherness(?) and somehow I feel as though I was some better. Two engineers and firemen from Alamosa walked out from town to see me and brought me a telegram from Mother Sweeney, asking how I was. This message had laid in Salina 24 hours and probably would have 24 days if some Alamosa friend had not brought it out.

DEC 3

About 12 inches of snow fell last night and snowed all day, did not see a living soul, had to stay in the shack and hover over the stove.

DEC 4

Last night was very cold, we had to keep the old cook stove

red hot to keep from suffering, was clear but remained cold all day, did not see a living soul.

DEC 5

Still remains clear and cold this Sunday, but no church bells or sweetheart calls for us today. Our provisions are very short again, my guard said if no one showed up soon he would break quarantine.

DEC 6

We had six callers today. Vic Learimer and his girl, she stayed down the road so did not get a good view of her, he brought me mail including a card from my sister Ethel and a letter from my sister Frances and some newspapers.

Dr. James came today, this was his second call, he did not come in nor did he leave any medicine. He said I could get out in about a week. He left some disinfectant(?) for my guard and told him to come in and leave me alone. We ordered a large supply of groceries, enough to last me until I am honorably discharged. A black cat came to see us, it was nearly starved and frozen and we fast stuffed it, dwindling our milk and meat with it. The weather is moderating and looks as though the storm is all over.

DEC 7

Nothing doing today, no visitors, the sun is shining and the day is pleasant but I have to stay in doors as they would not let me have my overshoes. I guess they thought I would skidoo.

DEC 8

This has been another fine day. The doctor sent out some more bug killer and tomorrow my nurse, guardian and old time friend and prospector will leave me and then I will be alone.

DEC 9

I am all alone today, my chum left this a.m. I have read everything I could find, then turned it upside down and read it backwards.

DEC 10

I went to bed early last night and about 10 p.m. the coyotes took it upon themselves to serenade me and they kept it up until about 12 midnight. Oh how I did wish I had a gun, I would have closed their meeting without ceremony. I had some fresh meat on the roof and I thought they would get it, they were so close. So I dressed, got an old broom, soaked it with coal oil, then opened the door softly and touched a match to the broom

and took after them. They left in a hurry and did not return. The city delivered two sacks of coal and some meat with a note that I would get out Monday the 13th.

Dec 11

Vic Learimer came out today and had his girl along. He brought me some papers and a letter from my sister in Charlotte, in contained proof picture of my two children. It made me so homesick I just sat down and bawled like a woman. I am now counting the hours of my exile.

DEC 12

This is another fine day, and Sunday too. I shaved after breakfast, then sat down and commenced to copy off my diary as I have been keeping it on the wall. Well the black cat just hopped on my lap and is teasing for dinner so will have to stop and cook again.



Daily Diary while  
I had Small pox  
Was taken sick Nov 16<sup>th</sup>  
while enroute from Channa  
to Alamosa but did not  
feel very bad only achd  
all over I reportell sick and  
did not go out an evening  
when she went out of  
Nov 17<sup>th</sup> I got up about  
9am feeling very bad but  
went up town and  
got a shave tried to eat a  
little breakfast got my  
mail made out two  
time slips and mailed  
them and went to my  
room about noon  
at about 2 o'clock Miss  
Roper phoned for a Dr.  
but did not get one



untill about 6 Pm in  
the mean time I had  
one chill after another with  
intermittent fevers the Dr  
gave me some medicine  
and I passed a miserable  
night  
Nov 18th

I got up about 10<sup>30</sup> am  
dressed and went to  
the well and got a picher  
of water and had not  
than to my room more  
than 15 min when I  
commenced to chill and  
fever and in 30 min  
I was cramping all over  
and felt as though there  
was gallons of water  
under my skin. Well  
I was out of my head



most of the time until  
about night when I came  
to myself Enger I M Wright  
Enger Happer and Enger  
Riddle, And the Dr, Dr  
Lueburger were there  
and I felt easier owing  
to Hypox the Dr had injected  
They secured a nurse for  
me that night I rested  
a little better on acct of  
them shooting so much  
dope in me

Nov 19

They bundled me up  
and took me in a  
automobile to the Depot  
and loaded me on  
the Salida train, for  
the Hospital I was an  
a cat in the baggage



car and the cat run so  
springy I suffered terrible  
and became very sick.  
throwing up nearly all of  
the way over was so  
weak on my arrival could  
not stand up. I was taken  
to the hospital in the  
ambulance and when there  
was filled up with medicine  
I had a chill that night  
but no more fever and  
did not have any more  
afterward  
Nov 20th

I commenced to improve  
some but felt very  
weak, cat napped all day  
only when the nurses  
would come and bother  
me with medicine



That night I rested good  
Nov 21

Still very weak but feeling  
fine I sat up in bed  
a little while and the  
nurse told me I could  
dress the next day I was  
commencing to feel very  
hungry but they would  
not give me any thing  
but coffee and milk  
sars commenced to come  
an my upper lip and  
the nurse told me my  
fever was broken and  
they were fever blisters

Nov 22

I felt so good after  
my breakfast of two  
salt boiled eggs and a  
little toast that I



dressed and went to  
the sun room and  
smoked a part of a  
cigar after being there  
about half of an hour  
I walked around a little  
but became so weak  
that I undressed and  
went to bed I noticed  
~~some~~ rash in my  
hair and on my face  
the nurse said she would  
tell the Dr.

Mar 23<sup>rd</sup>

I got up and dressed  
went down town and  
got a shave and hair  
cut when I got back  
to the Hospital my  
face and head were  
as solid mass of pimples



I had consulted one of  
the Drs before going down  
town he said it was  
epitax and gave me  
some Cinchona for it  
but on my return there  
were 4 Drs waiting for  
me and they pronounced  
it small pox. They  
locked me up in my  
room untill after noon  
then took me to an  
old unused Laundry  
that had a bed and stove  
in it. I found some old  
magnets and papers  
and managed to put in  
the balance of the day  
quite well I rested good  
that night



Nov 24th

This am the State Board  
of health called on me  
and pronounced it small  
pox. I asked what they  
were going to do with  
me he said they would  
take care of me I was  
satisfied that day that  
I would be taken <sup>to</sup> the  
Pest House that night  
but was not

Nov 25th

I did not get my breakfast  
untill 8<sup>30</sup> am and at 9 am Dr  
Curfman pounded on the door  
and said he was going to  
take me to the Pest house  
in his automobile, well we went  
to the - House like a mad out  
of a cannon I unloaded



in front of this wonderful  
place and the auto<sup>s</sup> started  
off. The Dis. said good by  
Old "man" Then I commenced  
to reconiter I found the main  
building without windows or  
doors. The floor about 6 inches  
or a foot deep with filth  
There was a supply of provisions  
and two cats and bedding  
piled on the floor, and  
an old cook stove made  
in the year one without  
any pipe. I said to myself  
here is where a white man  
breaks quarantine then I  
went on the out side and  
found about 1/2 ton of coal  
then commenced looking  
for water no matter  
nearer than the little



Arkansas and it was  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile  
away there was a 12x14  
board shack apart about 20 feet  
from main building  
I looked in here it was  
as filthy as the other building  
but could be cleaned easier  
so I started a fire outside  
and fixing a stove with  
a nail in the end I picked  
some old clothing off the  
wall and burned it up  
then found an old broom  
and commenced to clean  
out after doing all I could  
without a stove or  
water I went outside  
and waited results  
about 11<sup>30</sup> am a rig came  
up and I called out  
Small Pax, The answer



I got was I am not  
afraid of you I said you  
had better be for I am  
beginning to get desperate then  
a man about 60 years  
old said I came out to  
take care of you - I said  
you might as well go back  
for I am going to  
Alamogordo and will be there  
at 8:00 pm tonight then.  
he showed a pistol and  
said that I would be  
in the Salido post house  
and if I showed him any  
trouble he would be  
compelled to resort to  
that, showing his pistol  
Well my little bluff did not  
work so I had to do  
the next best thing, he started



to clean up the main  
building I told him I would  
do before I would stay in  
there then he looked in  
the shaft and said it  
was too small for two  
of us, I <sup>said</sup> very well you can  
have the main bldg  
and I will take the  
shaft then he scratched his  
head and said we could  
take out beds <sup>out</sup> every day  
and he guessed we could  
get along then he wanted  
to make the stone,  
I told him we would  
have to scrub out first  
then he started for water  
I let him loose until  
he was satisfied but he  
found none, well we



did not scrub out and I  
was very messy but we  
managed to get the camp  
stove in our temple  
virtue and he started to  
get dinner without  
washing himself I said  
you had better wash  
your hands as this is  
thursdays dinner he  
said he could not there  
was no matter but I  
made him go to the  
river and carry a bucket  
well we had fried potatoes  
canned corn bread and  
butter and coffee for dinner  
at 4:30 PM then we  
managed to get our beds  
made and I laid down  
nearer dead than alive



Nov 26

Dr Jones came today said I must not eat any fat meat he also sent out a quart of Olive Oil, my he must think I am a High water man. and needed lots of olive oil. I was up on the roof patching some holes as it looks like a storm when a sewing machine agent drove by I called out Small pox and that this was a Pest House he said I guess you do not want a sewing machine then I said not unless it would cure Small Pox but he never stopped to answer and the way he drove away would defy beholders



Nov 27th

Mr Harman drove by and  
threwed off a gunny sack  
full of Old Magnetyens  
and Papers, The city had  
two barrels of water hauled  
in whiskey barrels and  
when the teakettle boils and  
we make coffee this old  
post house smells like  
a distillery

My guard and would be  
nurse and I have gotten  
to be quite chummy he  
proved to be an old  
prospector and a 32° mason  
he had gotten short of  
funds and the city was  
paying him \$3.00 a day  
and he took this way  
to make a grub stake  
for the winter, But he



Knows about as much about  
cooking as a hog does about  
ironing a ruffled shirt  
and has no more business  
trying to nurse than a  
Rhony rabbit has to try  
and suck a bull dog  
Nov 28th

I rested well last night  
about two inches of snow fell  
last night This is Sunday  
and have had no callers

I looked over our reading matter  
over and found some appropriate  
reading for the day  
Nov 29th

About 6 inches of new snow  
fell last night. "Vic" Learimer  
came out to see how I  
was and brought me  
some mail. We ordered about



a meek supply of groceries by  
him as this was the first  
time anyone had showed  
up we were reduced to  
Potatoes flour water and salt  
with a little coffee without  
milk or sugar but now we  
are nicely provided for about  
a week. a young couple  
rode by hours back she was  
astride and stopped for a  
drink of water we told  
them this was a fresh  
H— and had a case of  
small pox in here but  
they could help themselves  
which they did and after  
they drank the young man  
said he thought it might  
be a Saloon from the  
taste of that water then  
rode away



Nov 30th

Still snowing and stormed  
all day, no one passed today  
and we did not see a living  
soul, nothing of any event  
happened

Dec 1st

Well this is another fine day "Lie"  
Terinner came today he brought  
me some news papers a letter  
from my sister my clean cloth  
and my razor my bumps  
are fast disappearing. And I  
feel very well.

Dec 2nd No callers in forenoon  
I shaved my whiskers they  
were more like hay my  
face is not a bit sore We had  
a fine dinner of Beef steak, Eggs,  
cooked Peas, Rye bread and butter,  
coffee with milk and sugar,  
Baked apples, stewed prunes,



fried Pattatoes with onions  
and ginger snaps for millers  
and somehow I feel as though  
I was some better. Two Eggs  
and firmen from alarrasa  
walked out from town to  
see me and brought me  
a telegram from Mother  
Lucy asking how I was  
this. Message had laid in  
Salida 24 hrs and probably  
would have 24 days if some  
alarrasa friend had not  
brought it out.

Dec 30<sup>th</sup>

About 12 inches of snow fell last  
night and snowed all day  
did not see a lung soul  
had to stay in the shack  
and hammer over the stove



Dec 4<sup>th</sup>

Last night was very cold  
we had to keep the old  
choke stove red hot to keep  
from suffering, was clear but  
remained cold all day did  
not see a living soul  
Dec 5<sup>th</sup>

Still remains clear  
and cold this is Sunday  
but no Church bells or  
sweet heart calls for us today  
Our provisions are very  
short again my guard  
said if no one showed  
up soon he would  
break quarantine  
Dec 6<sup>th</sup>

We had six callers today  
Vic Larimer and his girl  
she staid down the road  
so did not get a good



Visit of her, he brought me  
mail including a card from  
my sister Ethel and a letter  
from my sister Francis  
and some news papers  
Dr James came to day this  
was his second call he  
did not come in nor did  
he leave any word," he said  
I could get out in about  
a week he left some disaff"  
for my guard and told  
him to come in and  
leave me alone we  
ordered a large supply  
of groceries enough to last  
me until I am honorably  
discharged. A Black cat  
came to see us it  
was nearly starved and  
frozen and we just



adaptd it drinking our  
milk and meat with  
it. The weather is moderate  
and looks as though the  
storm is all over

Dec 7th

Nothing doing today, no  
visitors the sun is shining  
and the day is pleasant  
but I have to stay in doors  
as they would not let  
me have my overshoes  
I guess they thought I would  
skidoo

Dec 8th

This has been another fine  
day the Dr sent out some  
more big Kiler and tomorrow  
my nurse guardian and old  
time friend and prospector  
will leave me and then  
I will be alone



Dec 9th

I am all alone today  
my chum left this am  
I have read every thing I could  
find and then turned it  
upside down and read  
it back wards

Dec 10th

I went to bed early last  
night, and about 10 Pm the  
cyclos took it upon them  
selves to serenade me and  
they kept it up untill about  
12 Pm. Oh how I did wish  
I had a gun I would  
have closed their meeting  
without ceremony I had  
some fresh meat on  
the roof and I thought  
they would get it they  
were so close so I dress-  
ed an old braam soaked  
it with coal oil then



Opened the door softly  
and tucked a match to  
the brazier and took  
after them, they left in  
a hurry and did not  
return. The city delivered  
two sacks of coal and  
some meat with a  
rat that I would get  
out Monday the 13<sup>th</sup>  
Dec 11<sup>th</sup>

Jim Learner came out  
today and had his girl  
along. He brought me  
some papers and a  
letter from my sister  
in Charlotte it contained  
proof picture of my two  
children. It made me  
so homesick I just  
sat down and bawled



like a woman I am now  
counting the hours of my  
exile

Dec 12<sup>th</sup>

This is another fine day  
and Sunday too I shaved  
after breakfast then sat down  
and commenced to copy  
off my diary as I have  
been keeping it on the  
wall. Will the Black cat  
just hopped on my lap and  
is teasing for dinner soon  
will have to stop and cook  
again